

Introduction to Moodle

Note: this document addresses Moodle™ version 1.8. Other versions may require modifications to some instructions mentioned herein.

What is Moodle?

Moodle is a software package that is a course management system. It is open-source and copyrighted but is freely provided for use under the GNU Public License agreement. It was originally an acronym, MOODLE, which stood for **Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment**. Martin Dougiamas is its creator and keeps busy leading the Moodle development team (a constructivist process) from its headquarters in Perth, Australia. Moodle use has escalated sharply since its beginnings in 2003, with many thousands of Moodle servers being registered. Moodle, being free, compares well with much more expensive course management systems such as: Blackboard, Angel, WebCT, etc. The Moodle name and logo are trademarks of the Moodle Trust.

How to Login and Enroll in a Course

Go to: _____ Use *Firefox* web browser for best results.

Create New Account

1. Click on the “Login” button or blue linked word located at the top right corner of the main Moodle page.
2. Click on the button marked “Create new account”
3. Fill in the blanks. (Username on the Buddy Moodle server should be your first initial + last name.)
4. When all blanks are filled in, click the button marked “Create my new account.”
5. The program will check against its current user database for any missing or duplicate information. If it shows an error message like “This username already exists, choose another” try adding a number after your last name in the username blank.

Login and update profile: (Once the site administrator has set up or confirmed your account. . .)

1. Log in (your first initial and last name, usually) and your chosen password
2. View your profile by clicking on your name in blue “You are logged in as **blue name** (Logout)” at the top right or bottom center of the Moodle page. You will note tabs for “profile,” “edit profile,” “forum posts,” “blogs,” and “activity reports” under your name at the top center.
3. Choose “edit profile” then correct any entries and add your school name to the description window. Click the “Update Profile” button to save changes. On this page you can also upload your image. (Useful for forum discussions and chat activities.)

Enroll in a Moodle course:

1. Once logged in, look in the course listing on the main Moodle server page. (Click on the blue **BTLC** (the far left breadcrumb link) near the top left of the window to get to the main page.
2. Click on _____ course listed in the _____ category.
3. A screen asking for an “enrolment key” may appear. Type “**buddy2**” then click the “Enrol me in this course” button. (“Enrolment” and “Enrol” are spelled in Australian English.)

Getting Around in Moodle:

Basic Moodle design incorporates a “breadcrumbs” trail near the top of each page window similar to:

BTLC » MFB » Forums » Share your Moodle Ideas & Discoveries » Using Moodle

To move back to a previous section of the course, click on the blue text in the “breadcrumbs” trail. Using the “back” button of your browser may work, but may also yield unwanted results.

Users and Permissions:

Users: Three basic types of user categories include, and are assigned by the site administrator:

Administrators – (with privileges to do everything or almost everything on the server)

Teachers — (with privileges to only teach, or to teach and create courses)

Students — (with privileges to enroll and engage in courses)

Guests — (with few privileges, but may be allowed to view some courses and information.)

Your Moodle site administrator can grant or modify certain user privileges on the system, creating variations of each user permission category, including giving others some administration roles.
(version 1.8 and up only)

Moodle components

Like most web pages, your Moodle course “main page” will divide information into certain sections or areas on the page. Dependent upon layout choices you make, you may see several section boxes down the central portion of the window with boxes, called “blocks” on either or both sides of the main sections. Within the main or block sections you may display text, images, and links to other pages or course activities.

- **Course section:** This is the course content visible on the main page of the course.
- **Resources:** These are additional text or html pages that you create for your course, web pages or websites to which you provide links, or access (through links) to files of virtually any type (Office documents, etc.) that you wish to have course students (participants) download for printing or study, or even to a directory (folder) listing of resources that may be downloaded for use.
- **Activities:** There are dozens of activity modules that have been developed for use in Moodle. We will explain and explore a few of these later in this workshop, but they include such things as questionnaires, quizzes, wikis, lessons, assignments, glossaries and forums. Activity modules can be added to and activated on your Moodle server by your site administrator.
- **Blocks:** Special purpose ‘sections’ that appear to the right and/or left of the main course section. These typically contain summary information and/or links to such things as the *Administration* (with links to various components that the user’s authority allows), *Upcoming Events* (with reminders of dates to note for the course or site and link to the course calendar), *Latest News* (with recent postings by teacher or others in the forums). Many other blocks can added, deleted or be chosen for viewing by course creators for the course students.

Moodle uses

There are myriad uses for Moodle “courses.” Certainly, it is primarily designed to manage a course with course content, resource links and activities to be managed and assessed by the instructor. Courses may be designed to be presented entirely online, or to guide school classroom instruction. Moodle courses can also be used to organize and manage instructional resources — a sort of annotated electronic file cabinet. A Moodle server might be used as a framework to publish a website, allowing teachers to quickly update separate sections to support their classroom news and announcements. School librarians can use Moodle to prepare a learning portal. Extracurricular activities and clubs can use Moodle to manage club activities and discussions. The principal can host virtual staff meetings via Moodle, using the forum and chat activity modules. Surveys can be prepared and implemented via Moodle to school and community to support school improvement plans and other purposes.

For more ideas in how to use and create Moodle courses, visit the official Moodle website: <http://www.moodle.org>. For training opportunities that support Moodle visit our Buddy Teaching and Learning Center site at <http://www.btlc.org>.